

The American Cancer Society (ACS) marks the 35th Great American Smokeout on November 18. Smokers are encouraged to make a plan on this date to quit smoking or plan in advance to make November 18 the day to quit. Quitting smoking improves overall health and leads to reduced cancer risk.

Quitting smoking benefits not only the smoker but those around him or her. According to the ACS, each year, in the United States alone, secondhand smoke is responsible for:

- An estimated 46,000 deaths from heart disease in non-smokers who live with smokers
- About 3,400 lung cancer deaths in non-smoking adults
- 50,000-300,000 lung infections (such as pneumonia and bronchitis) in children younger than 18 months of age, which results in 7,500 to 15,000 hospitalizations annually.
- Increases in number and severity of asthma attacks in about 200,000 to 1 million children who have asthma
- More than 750,000 middle ear infections in children
- Pregnant women exposed to secondhand smoke are also at increased risk of having low birth-weight babies.

If you are interested in more information on quitting smoking or the effects of secondhand smoke, the Long Beach Island Health Department suggests the following resources:

- American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345) or visit their website at www.cancer.org
- American Heart Association 1-800-242-8721 or www.americanheart.org
- American Stroke Association 1-888-478-7653 or www.strokeassociation.org
- Quitting tips and advice can be found at everydaychoices.org or 1-866-399-6789
- American Lung Association 1-800-586-4872 or www.lungusa.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Office on Smoking and Health 1-800-232-4636 or www.cdc.gov/tobacco ; free quit support line: 1-800-784-8669 TTY: 1-800-332-8615
- Advice on how to protect children from secondhand smoke Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 202-272-0167 or www.epa.gov
- National Cancer Institute 1-800-422-6237 or www.cancer.gov